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Summary record of the 29th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 21, May 2018, at 3 p.m.

Vice-President: Mr Matjila ..... (South Africa)
later: Mr. Mahmadaminov (Vice-President)..... (Tajikistan)

Contents

Agenda item: High-level segment (*continued*)

(c) Development Cooperation Forum (*continued*)

Session 2: Mainstreaming inclusive multi-stakeholder partnerships and approaches in development cooperation: policy and legal frameworks

Session 3: Getting better results for sustainable development: the role of national development cooperation policies

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The meeting was called to order at 3:10 p.m.

Agenda item 5: High-level segment

(c) Development Cooperation Forum (*continued*)

Session 2: Mainstreaming inclusive multi-stakeholder partnerships and approaches in development cooperation: policy and legal frameworks

1. **Mr. Harris** (Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development and Chief Economist, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), moderator, introducing the panel discussion, said that the discussion would focus on how to leverage comparative advantages brought by various development partners in multi-stakeholder partnerships and what sort of policy and legal frameworks could be put in place to make it most effective. Each partner made a different contribution; he thus invited the panellists to consider whether one general framework could accommodate all partners, or whether more detailed and tailored frameworks were needed. There were also questions regarding what type of support must be given and received from a particular partner and the linkages among partners. Each partner would also have different responsibilities, and he wondered how to build those varying responsibilities into the accountability framework.

2. **Ms. Fine** (Acting Assistant to the Administrator, Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning, United States Agency for International Development (USAID)), panellist, said that her agency had significant experience with multi-stakeholder partnerships and what they could and could not be. A recent review of such partnerships had revealed that they had produced mixed results and should not be seen as a panacea for development. Thus it was important to be clear where they made sense and where another approach was more appropriate. The United States Government often had the role of funder for development projects, yet in the face of complex development challenges it was important to realize that more than money was needed — technology, new ideas and fresh approaches were also required, and multi-stakeholder partnerships could often bring together all the necessary institutions with those attributes. Her agency had also learned that it could be difficult to make projects inclusive in a meaningful way. Lastly, she pointed out that different partners had different objectives: private sector involvement was often transactional, whereas government partners were accountable to their legislatures and citizens for their use of resources. It was thus important that the expectations of all partners should be made clear from the outset.

3. **Ms. Mkhize** (Chief Director, Innovation for Inclusive Development, Department of Science and Technology, South Africa), panellist, said that partnerships for scientific and technological innovation must be aligned with national priorities and needs and use and strengthen existing capacities. Multi-stakeholder development partnerships were complex and should be viewed as long-term commitments.

4. In establishing partnerships, her department looked for policy clarity and balance of mandates in order to achieve a common purpose. It sought a holistic approach that included innovation along with piloting and testing to ensure that any technology brought from outside would be appropriate to the national context. Coherence was also needed between science, technology and innovation policy and development policy. Potential development cooperation partners must also be open to risk and willing to change their approach and engage in creative destruction as needed to achieve objectives, catalyse change in the system and build capacity.

5. The main challenge to development partnerships was that, for the most part, the resource commitment of 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) for development had not been met. It was also a challenge to engage the private sector early enough in the process to allow a project to be scaled up adequately. Impact must be measured through both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

6. **Mr. Hoffman** (Board Member, Global Entrepreneurship Network and the Unreasonable Group), panellist, said that he was not a policy-maker; his perspective on multi-stakeholder partnerships was that of a problem-solver or entrepreneur. He was pleased to report that entrepreneurs welcomed the Sustainable Development Goals, as they provided a shared framework of problems that needed to be addressed. They could not wait for the policy-makers to complete their work, however, before starting work on solutions, and some entrepreneurs even tended to view policy as an obstacle to action rather than a help. It seemed to him that the policy-makers sometimes tried too hard to make the policy perfect before releasing it, rather than putting it out and letting the community refine the policy through experience. All the problems did not need to be solved beforehand.

7. The United Nations had established the Goals to solve the world's problems, but the people who would actually do the work had not been in the room when the policy had been made and their voices were not being heard. He urged the policy-makers to go out to the towns

and villages and study the problem-solving process from the ground up, even though it could involve getting dirty.

8. The Development Cooperation Forum reports he had read showed a major focus on project funding, but money alone did not solve problems; human capital and mentoring were just as important. Although the importance of funding could not be denied, without mentorship it was wasted. It was also important to measure not just the amount of money raised to fund projects but their real outcome and impact — for example how many people had been lifted out of poverty or how much the infant mortality rate had fallen.

9. He invited Governments to become involved with organizations like the Global Entrepreneurship Network, with a presence in 170 countries, which had been formed for the purpose of convening the solution providers. He also urged them to join the Unreasonable Group, which was creating public-private partnerships to solve the problems posed by the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. It aimed to hold a boot camp to brainstorm for solutions, like the one recently held on Goal 3 on health, on each of the Goals; hosts for the 16 other boot camps would be welcomed.

10. **Ms. Nicholls** (Canada) highlighted the importance of pursuing gender equality through diversifying partnerships and providing direct funding for local women's organizations in developing countries.

11. **Mr. Park** Chull-Joo (Republic of Korea) said that the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships in sharing knowledge and best practices was no longer in question; civil society and the private sector had an increasing amount of influence in that context. It was also important for members of vulnerable groups as beneficiaries to be fully involved in policy-making and implementation of projects affecting them.

12. In his view, the traditional model where two central Governments met as donor and recipient to establish development projects was no longer working. Rather, Governments must establish a policy environment and regulatory framework for private sector involvement. He asked what was the biggest obstacle to private sector contribution to the achievement of the Goals.

13. **Mr. Almino** (Observer for Brazil) said that civil society organizations, academia and the private sector had a contribution to make to the achievement of the Goals but must maintain coherence through coordination with developing country Governments. In the view of his delegation, eligibility criteria for private sector partners were needed, which might include such aspects as the extent of technology transfer, employment generation, income generation and tax revenues, strengthening of productive chains and non-monopolistic practices. Cultural diversity, technical capacity and transparent management of funds allocated should also be considered.

14. **Mr. Motter** (Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)) said that policy-making was indeed painful and slow, but it was clear that no one actor had the solution to every problem; solutions had to be found within an integrated framework such as the Sustainable Development Goals. Policy-makers such as those in the United Nations should therefore give themselves more credit for creating an environment in which those problems could be addressed.

15. **Mr. Harris** (Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development and Chief Economist, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) said that both a loose partnership framework with the main focus on beneficiaries and a more structured approach with clear criteria for private sector partners had been raised, and he wondered which seemed preferable to members of the panel.

16. **Mr. Hoffman** (Board Member, Global Entrepreneurship Network and the Unreasonable Group) said that the different stakeholders in a partnership might indeed have varying objectives in the short term, but in the end it would not be possible to achieve solutions on a global scale without unified objectives.

17. **Mr. Maestripieri** (Deputy Director-General for International Cooperation, Italy), panellist, said that his focus was the legal framework established in Italy to support multi-stakeholder partnerships.

18. His Government had established three legal entities in that area, the first being an inter-governmental committee on development cooperation that brought together the lead ministry in that area, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, along with other relevant ministries, such as Environment and Finance, taking a whole-of-government approach to ensure policy coherence. The second entity was the National Council for Development Cooperation, with some 80 members from all levels of government — central, regional and local — as well as civil society organizations and the universities. It had a consultative role on policy matters but also the ability to make proposals. It had opted for informal methods and had established working groups on various issues. The third was the Conference for Development Cooperation, which was convened every three years and had last met in January 2018. Its aim was to allow for open public

debate among stakeholders in order to raise public awareness of development cooperation, especially among the younger generation.

19. As an example of the work of those entities, he mentioned the working group established by the National Council on migration and development, currently a sensitive subject in Italy. It had convened a diaspora summit based on the experience of the various diaspora communities in the country, which had engaged civil society organizations, local government and the governments of the main countries of origin, which had resulted in an outcome document providing a common basis for action. The private sector, universities and civil society organizations had also worked together to provide policy guidance on energy that had been adopted at the government level.

20. **Mr. Gély** (Head of Division and Head of the Global Programme Water, Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation), panellist, focusing his remarks on the water sector, said that water-borne diseases were related to 3 to 5 million deaths per year, yet only 40 per cent of the transboundary water basins in the world were governed by international agreements.

21. It was important, moreover, to choose partners carefully when rethinking policy boundaries. In developing a transboundary agreement it would of course be necessary to work with the ministry responsible for water resources, yet many other areas, including, energy, trade, agriculture and security, were also involved. There was a lack of interest among youth in the water sector. He thus advocated for a move beyond partnership to the establishment of what he termed the "blue peace" movement, which would help to raise awareness among the new generation and attract funding for transboundary water projects.

22. A soft infrastructure of dialogue must first be created, both with private sector partners that were interested in profit and would also have a positive impact, and with the political leadership of countries who might have concerns over national security issues and sovereignty. It was important to work with the key brokers to advance the agenda, based on the principles of shared benefit, risk and responsibility. That dialogue would then create the conditions for implementation activities where the private sector could have a role. In a well-regulated policy environment, the private sector and multinational companies could have a role in data management, sharing and design, for example.

23. **Mr. Mohammed** (Permanent Representative of Maldives to the United Nations), panellist, said that, as a small island developing State, Maldives had often asked itself whether the purpose of partnership was for development or for economic growth.

24. Maldives was a chain of 1200 islands, only 188 of which were inhabited. Economic sector growth and development thus represented different dimensions. Each island had infrastructure needs, for a harbour, hospital, bank, school, roads and more, the public goods needed in any city. It had experimented with public/private partnership in 2009, with mixed results. The private sector was necessarily driven by profit, whereas the public sector in most cases was driven by votes, and the difficulty lay in bringing the two together for inclusive growth. The tourism sector took the lead, but it had been difficult to transfer that growth to other sectors where there would be no profit. As an experiment the Government, when leasing islands for resort development, had asked developers to provide infrastructure on neighbouring islands, with limited success. There was also the difficult question of whether institutions were strong enough to monitor investment projects, given the remote location of many islands; perhaps institutional development should come first.

25. **Ms. Boethius** (Impact Hub Geneva and Accelerate 2030) said that many challenges could be solved by entrepreneurship, usually through technology-enabled solutions driven by engaged citizens and entrepreneurs. Her organization was based in Geneva, and because of its proximity to both the United Nations and a vibrant investment sector, had entered into a partnership with UNDP called Accelerate 2030, which aimed to identify entrepreneurs from developing countries to solve the problems posed in the Sustainable Development Goals. Impact Hub provided support, resources, visibility and connections to some 40 partners, with some unlikely allies. They achieved the best results when working with existing local structures and development actors. Entrepreneurs moved quickly, and in addition to a policy framework they needed an ecosystem and financial resources. It was important to understand and integrate the real needs of entrepreneurs and key stakeholders in the local context. It would be interesting to hear about successes, certainly, but also failures and what had been learned from them, in the context of multi-stakeholder partnerships.

26. **Mr. Meja** (Reality for Aid Africa) said that the policy and legal framework was indeed important but it must be backed up by an enabling political environment. It was crucial to have effective institutions to enable multi-stakeholder partnerships, for if institutions were weak such partnerships would not work.

27. **Ms. Palomares** (IBON International Foundation) said that international development cooperation

frameworks tended to involve a narrow range of stakeholders, who were mainly international development cooperation partners. Non-governmental organizations were missing from the picture, and Governments should address the continued closing of civil space that undermined the ability of civil society organizations to advocate for human rights and accountability to the intended beneficiaries.

28. **Mr. Daoudi** (Morocco) asked whether the level of development cooperation was expanding or shrinking. Over time it seemed that lending institutions had replaced governments as providers of funding, and many developing countries currently found themselves in debt. Noting the gaps in scientific research and cooperation between rich and poor countries, he urged the promotion of technical cooperation if the international community was serious about closing that gap.

29. **Mr. Harris** (Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development and Chief Economist, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) asked whether the institutions or the policy should come first, and how much predictability the private sector required when it came to development policy.

30. **Mr. Mastripietri** (Deputy Director-General for International Cooperation, Italy) said that in his country there were established relationships with civil society organizations, but involvement of the private sector in development cooperation required more precise setting of rules beforehand.

31. **Mr. Mohammed** (Permanent Representative of Maldives to the United Nations) said that he agreed that rules, procedures and institutions must be in place before entering into such partnerships. It was possible for institutions to evolve, however. In 1972 when the tourism sector in Maldives had opened, the institutional framework to govern it did not yet exist, but the sector was mainly profit-driven. Building an airport was a bankable project with a clear return, but the need for public goods was minimal at the time. The development of the islands through building hospitals and roads was not necessarily bankable, however, and the scale factor was critical. Some islands had populations of only a few hundred people, yet they required the same services. In his view, institutions must play a major role and should come before multi-stakeholder partnerships.

32. **Ms. Fine** (Acting Assistant to the Administrator, Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning, United States Agency for International Development (USAID)) said that she felt a sense of urgency in moving forward both with forming partnerships and building institutions. It was important to work on creating an enabling environment for the private sector and on building human capacity at the same time. The role of official development assistance (ODA) was to help countries manage and develop their own institutions and create an enabling environment. USAID was working on changing its culture for more engagement with the private sector.

33. **Mr. Gély** (Head of Division and Head, Global Programme Water, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation) said that a certain degree of entropy and creative destruction must be allowed. In order to accelerate progress towards realization of the water footprint principle and the right to water and sanitation, a policy must be in place before partnerships were formed.

34. **Ms. Mkhize** (Chief Director, Innovation for Inclusive Development, Department of Science and Technology, South Africa) said that partners must recognize that they were drawn together by a common purpose and also acknowledge that no one partner could do everything. Policy had its space, which should enable the private sector through political support at multiple levels, each within its respective mandate.

35. **Mr. Harris** (Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development and Chief Economist, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), summarizing the discussion, said that the panellists agreed on the need for both policy and institutions to frame partnership and recognized the differing roles of partners.

36. *Mr. Mahmadaminov (Tajikistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

Session 3: Getting better results for sustainable development: the role of national development cooperation policies

37. **Mr. Harris** (Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development and Chief Economist, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), moderator, introducing the panel discussion, said that one of the questions to be addressed in the panel discussion and subsequent informal discussions of national development cooperation polices was whether target-setting enhanced the overall effectiveness of such policies and if so, what sort of targets should be set. The best way to organize the regular review of development cooperation should also be addressed. In setting targets, partners must agree on what each partner was expected to deliver, and the targets must be appropriate to the contribution of each. Targets were the baseline for measuring progress, and what prevented them from

being used to understand and measure overall progress should also be examined.

38. **Mr. Daoudi** (Minister Delegate to the Head of Government in charge of General Affairs and Governance of Morocco), panellist, said that the Moroccan Government had established a specific policy on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and was working on new legislation to govern development cooperation between the private sector and the government, which its current laws did not cover.

39. Desalination of sea water along its 3000 km of coastline was an example of an area where such cooperation was taking place. Although Morocco was an oil producer, 40 per cent of national energy needs were met through renewable energy sources. It viewed the Goals as a long-term, intergenerational project which would help it meet its objectives regarding air quality, climate change, waste treatment and coastal biodiversity. With the private sector, Morocco had entered into a pilot desalination project and had constructed one of the world's largest solar farms.

40. The national strategy and the human resources development project were based on the review of the development policy and legal framework to foster partnership with the private sector. Under its national agricultural strategy for a green Morocco, the country had become a net exporter of agricultural products through use of desalinated sea water for agricultural irrigation and had registered 7 to 8 per cent annual growth in that sector. Better waste management and treatment also required significant capital. The goal was to ensure that all small and medium-sized cities had adequate sanitation facilities by 2030. Morocco held 75 per cent of the world's phosphate reserves, which were mainly used as fertilizer, and by 2030 it aimed to be the main producer for agricultural use; future global stability could depend on Moroccan phosphate.

41. There had been rapid development in the promotion of international cooperation and exchange of experience; in 2017 Morocco had been the major recipient of foreign direct investment in Africa. Among challenges faced, however, technological development did not always encourage job creation. The objectives of the economic development policy included accelerated economic growth and job creation, along with social security protections for the entire population. The goals of the development programme by 2021 included safe drinking water for every citizen and development of the health and education sectors.

42. **Mr. Yanara** (Minister attached to the Prime Minister and Secretary-General of the Cambodia Rehabilitation and Development Board), panellist, said that over his two decades of experience in development, he had observed that development cooperation had made a positive impact in Cambodia. The country had undergone a remarkable transformation and had recently been graduated into the group of middle-income countries. There was a strong commitment by the Government to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the promise to leave no one behind. Ownership and a clear vision were the most fundamental building blocks that had allowed significant resources to be mobilized. Official development assistance had complemented domestic resources in the areas of infrastructure, human resources development and institutional reform.

43. The national development cooperation policy identified the main principles and tools to strengthen partnerships. Its main objectives were to use external resources to promote sustainable development in line with the long-term national vision, for capacity building and strengthening of institutions, and to ensure that all development actors were convened in partnerships that were equitable and aimed at broad-based growth. The strategy also set out how development operations were to be managed by clarifying dialogue structures and terms of engagement to ensure inclusive participation. Joint monitoring indicators had been decided in order to ensure transparency and accountability. The cooperation mechanism dated to 2003; key to its success had been sharing of good practices and a results-based approach. An update to the policy was under way that would incorporate South-South and triangular cooperation methods.

44. Turning to the future role of development cooperation in the wider context of the 2030 Agenda, he said that the mid-term review had identified some challenges, with poverty reduction and inclusive growth underlying them all, along with the need for institutional development, economic competitiveness, equality and inclusion. Monitoring systems and capacity were critical to leaving no one behind: information was needed on the poorest and most vulnerable members of society in order to increase understanding of the dynamic of inclusion.

45. The mid-term assessment of development financing had revealed that domestic resources amounted to 20 per cent of GDP, or four times the amount of ODA received. The Government would clearly take the lead role in implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Cambodia. The Government would continue to strengthen relationships with all development actors and examine the role of the development cooperation policy in leveraging partnerships as part of its development planning for the coming five years.

46. **The President** said that following the adjournment of the formal meeting, three parallel dialogues would be held under the topic of Session 3, "Getting better results for sustainable development: the role of national development cooperation policies".

47. Dialogue I would be moderated by Ms. Sidiropoulous (Chief Executive, South African Institute of International Affairs); the panellists were Ms. Nasser (Vice-minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Honduras), Ms. Rheyati (Head of Multilateral Cooperation Service, Division of International Cooperation, Director of Partnership, Communication and Cooperation, State Secretariat for Sustainable Development, Morocco) and Mr. Chipiko (Member of Parliament, Malawi).

48. Dialogue II would be moderated by Mr. Harris (Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development and Chief Economist, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), with Mr. Miranda (Deputy Minister of Development Cooperation, El Salvador), Mr. Garcia (Vice-Minister for Development Cooperation, Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development, Dominican Republic), Mr. Ongodo (Director-General for Cooperation and Regional Integration, Ministry of the Economy, Planning and Regional Development, Cameroon) and Mr. Cissé (Member of Parliament, Mali) as panellists.

49. Dialogue III would be moderated by Mr. Illa (Coordinator, Social Cohesion and South-South Cooperation, SEGIB), with Ms. Srimaitreephithak (Director-General, International Cooperation Agency, Thailand), Mr. Londono Zurek (Director, Presidential Cooperation Agency, Colombia) and Mr. Romero (Senator, Argentina) as panellists.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.